

## IN THE CLAIMS

### Please amend the claims as followed:

1. (amended) A spare tire handling device adapted for moving a spare tire relative to a vehicle, the device comprising, in combination:
  - a winch apparatus;
  - a flexible member adjacent to the winch, the flexible member having one end attached to the winch and the other end detachably engageable with the tire, the tire being displaceable from an accessible position to a stored position in response to the rotation of the winch in one direction and from the stored position to the accessible position in response to the rotation of the winch in the opposite direction;
  - a wheel retainer member adjacent to the other end of the flexible member, the wheel retainer member having a housing and at least one extending portion being rotatable from a retracted position to an extended position; a stop adjacent the housing, the stop preventing over-rotation of the at least one extending portion beyond the extended position; and a biasing member urging the at least one extending portion toward the extended position.
2. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 1 wherein the biasing member is a torsional spring
3. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 1 wherein the extended portion is a pair of opposite extended members.
4. (amended) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 1 wherein the spare tire has a rim including an aperture, the wheel retainer being insertable inserted into the aperture ~~with when~~ the extended portion being is in the retracted position and ~~as the retainer passes through the aperture, being sized greater than the aperture when~~ the extended portion is moved by the biasing member toward the extended position, ~~to permit engagement of the wheel retainer member engaging the rim when the winch is rotated in the one direction.~~
5. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 1 wherein the at least one extended portion has a hole, and the housing has an opening, and further comprising: a pivot pin disposed in the hole and the opening to connect the extended portion to the housing, the biasing member is adjacent the pivot pin.
6. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 1 wherein the biasing member is a torsional spring member having one end adjacent to the housing and the other end adjacent to the extended portion, and further comprising: a pivot pin connecting the extended portion to the housing.

7. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 1 further comprising: a rim spacer member adjacent the rim.

8. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 1 wherein the housing further including a secondary lock assembly.

9. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 1 wherein the housing further having secondary lock assembly and the spare tire having a rim, the rim including a radial web portion axially oriented with respect to the face of the tire and further comprising: a rim spacer member adjacent the rim, the spacer having a portion forming a hole and an axial extending stand-off portion adjacent the hole, the flexible member being disposed in the hole, the stand-off portion limiting the axial movement of the wheel retainer into the radial web portion of the rim so that with face of the tire in one position, the extended portion passes through the aperture in the rim and with the face of the tire in another position, the extended portion is prevented from passing through the aperture.

10. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 1 wherein the tire having a rim portion, the rim portion including a recess, and further comprising: a rim spacer member adjacent the rim, the spacer member having a radial wing portion contacting the recess to orient the rim spacer in the rim.

11. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 1 further comprising: a rim spacer member adjacent the tire, the rim spacer member being sized to permit a predetermined size of tire to be accommodated by the spare tire handling device.

12.(amended) A spare tire handling device mounted on a vehicle and adapted for moving a spare tire between a stored and an accessible position relative to the vehicle, the device including a winch member and a flexible member attached at one end to the winch member and the other end detachably engageable with the spare tire whereby the tire is displaceable from the accessible to the stored position in response to the operation of the winch member in one direction and from the stored to the accessible position in response to the operation of the winch member in the direction opposite to the one direction, the device comprising, in combination: a tire carrier having a housing and a wheel retainer with at least one extending portion pivotally connected to the housing, the extending portion being movable from a retracted position to an extended position; and a biasing member biasing the extending portion toward the extended position.

13. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 12 further comprising: a pivot pin connecting at least one extending portion to the housing, the biasing member being disposed about the pivot pin.

14. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 12 wherein the housing having a secondary latch.

15. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 12 further comprising: a saddle member adjacent to the housing; and a stop in the saddle member to prevent over-

rotation beyond the extended position and a second stop member to prevent over-rotation beyond the retracted position.

16. (original) The spare tire handling device as claimed in claim 12 further comprising: a rim spacer member adjacent the tire, the rim spacer having an axial standoff portion.

17.-20.( cancelled without prejudice).

21. (new) A spare tire handling device for attachment to a vehicle with a flexible member, the device comprising:

a tire carrier;

a wheel retainer connected to the tire carrier for supporting a tire in a stowed position on a vehicle,

the wheel retainer including an extending portion movable between an extended position and a retracted position, the wheel retainer in the extended position having a length that is greater than a diameter of an aperture of a tire to be supported and the wheel retainer in a retracted position having a length that is less than an aperture of a spare tire to be supported.

22. (new) The spare tire handling device of claim 21, wherein the extending portion is biased to the extended position.

23. (new) The spare tire handling device of claim 21, wherein the extending portion includes a pair of rotating members attached to the tire carrier for supporting a spare tire by the underside when the spare tire is in a stowed position.

24. (new) The spare tire handling device of claim 23, wherein the tire carrier includes an elongate body for passing through an aperture in a tire rim, the pair of extending members rotatably supported by the elongate body.

25. (new) The spare tire handling device of claim 21, wherein the tire carrier further includes a secondary lock connected to the wheel retainer for preventing a tire from disengaging from a vehicle if a flexible member should break.

27. (new) The spare tire handling device of claim 25, wherein the secondary lock includes a pair of locking arms connected to the elongate body, each lock arm having a cam for biasing each lock arm in a locking position.